

## **DEVELOPING STUDENTS' READING SKILL AND ATTITUDE TOWARD READING USING COACHING APPROACH**

**KANYA KONGSOONGNOEN**

Thepsatri Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

### **ABSTRACT**

Given the importance of reading to people as an important tool to further their education, career, and life, the study aimed to develop the students' reading skill and attitude towards reading. This paper studied how reading skills and attitude towards reading of the students of English as the Foreign Language were improved through teacher's coaching. The data were collected from 10 students of the English International program enrolled in a Reading for Pleasure course at a university in Thailand in 2013 academic year. Through teacher's coaching, the students were guided to independently reading, reflected what they read, and importantly brought what they learn from reading to real life creating the three English camps for 200 elementary school students in two elementary schools. The students evaluated the effectiveness of the course using a set of questionnaire and their oral reflections were also conducted at the end of every activity to promote their thinking. They were assigned to search different types of reading texts from the Internet and did the presentation for their study. The students' responses to the questionnaire, reflections, presentations, and final grade were analysed. The results of the study revealed that students' reading skill was improved and their attitude towards reading English was positively higher. All students were satisfied with what they applied their knowledge and experience to help young children. In addition, working on the English Camps for young students, their team working skills were clearly improved.

**KEYWORDS:** Reading Skill and Attitude, English as the Foreign Language

### **INTRODUCTION**

"A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read."—Mark Twain

Reading skills has been considered critical because reading ability is the basic crucial tool for people to access and use information to learn both in and outside classroom. Evidently, students with proper reading skills can explore a large variety of topics whereas the students with low reading ability cannot even read signs, understand medical information or prescription directions, or apply for jobs that require basic skills tests. Normally, good readers build background knowledge about many different subjects that he can later use, furthermore, they can later develop writing and language skills necessary for academic and professional success (Hoss &Media, 2014). Competent readers should manifest much different perspectives on Knowledge and knowing (Patricia A. Alexander and the Disciplined, 2012). Not only teachers focus on teaching reading for students but also parents get involve in reading tutoring their kids in order to improve their academic skills (Mitchell and Begeny, 2014).

The importance of the development of reading skills is a critical issue of all countries (Tobin and Hill, 2012) since reading is immensely beneficial for readers in many ways such as developing education, career, quality of life, and attitude

towards things around the world. Because most knowledge is derived from reading, thus, to develop the potential of a country, the populations need to be educated to be a good reader. In particular learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, technology and reading English become necessary for people because a huge amount of information was provided on the Internet and written in English. Print-based reading texts always have been multimodal (Jewitt, 2005 & Levy, 2009).

As an instructor of three courses of reading (Reading Strategies, Reading for Interpretation, and Reading for Pleasure) for two years and a teacher of English as foreign language more than 20 years, I found reading English for students whose English is a foreign language is not much successful because it requires self-regulated learning which doesn't work well with Thai students. Based on the changing technology, new literacies, and my students' background, I, therefore, designed learning activities that help my students accomplish reading and make them feel successful and proud of themselves. Doing so, the students have positive attitude toward reading and they would love to read as they know they gain a lot of benefits for reading.

As technology has become a huge catalyst influencing learning medium as well as reading texts for most people, still reading skill is considered more important and teachers need to apply proper technology when teaching literacies. In addition, it blurs the standard distinction between in-school and out- of school. Many researchers suggested a relationship between students' reading skills and their achievement (Conradi, Gee Jang, Bryant, Craft, & McKenna, 2013). Reading literacy is one of the key competencies for full participation in modern societies (Kolić-Vehovec, 2014). Given the importance of reading skills and attitude toward reading, the researcher, therefore, designed learning activities to improve students' reading skills attitude toward reading through coaching approach.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY**

The study was designed to develop the students' reading skill and attitude towards reading. This paper studied how reading skills and attitude towards reading of the students of English as the Foreign Language were improved through teacher's coaching. The focus of this study was to discover how to engage students to effectively be self-regulated and have positive attitude toward reading.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Vygotsky's sociocultural framework provides the theoretical framework of this study because this approach is based on the concept that learning activities take place in cultural contexts and are mediated by language and other symbol systems (Langer, 2006). According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, teacher and student learning occurs in an environment in which both can participate in thoughtful examination and discourse. This perspective emphasizes the role of social interactions and cultural organized activities in influencing cognitive development. Vygotsky stresses the importance of social history and places a heavy emphasis on the role of culture and social history in education, suggesting that the process of education works from the outside in. Constructivists embrace the personal experiences of the learner and build on existing knowledge where teachers serve as guides and facilitate students in problem solving activities and developing strategies. Based on Vygotsky's theory, interactive learning through group communication enables the learners to actively construct their own perspectives (Brook & Oliver, 2003; Wilson & Stacy, 2004).

Drawing on Vygotsky's theory, conceptual understandings are developed through verbal interaction. Stacy and Rice (2002) found that a socially constructed learning environment is essential for effective learning. To support this concept, Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) indicated that deep and meaningful learning results when there are

sufficient levels of cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence. In addition, multiliteracies which derived from the shifts in the usage of the English language within different cultures and the growth of technology and multimedia that have been changing people communication frame this study.

Because new varieties of literacy are emerging from the internet and other technologies, today's instruction has changed (Masny & Cole, 2009). To Masny and Cole, the philosophy of multiliteracies is based in phenomenology, and technology is fundamentally significant in multiliteracies. According to the new literacies, "A pedagogy of multiliteracies requires that the role of agency in the meaning making process be recognized, and in that recognition it seeks to create a more productive, relevant, innovative, creative, and even, perhaps, emancipator pedagogy" (Baker, 2010. p. 72). Baker identified four major dimensions of multiliteracies pedagogy (a) situated practice, (b) overt instruction, (c) critical framing, and (d) transformed practice.

Multiliteracies have greatly impacted literacy instruction in the classroom (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Because of the use of multiliteracies, literacy teachers have been encouraged to engage with technology in every aspect of the literacy-learning program as students need to be prepared for the technological and global workplace (Masny & Cole, 2009). The role of teacher is enhanced because technology alone cannot educate and guide students as effectively as when teachers facilitate the use of technology (Gudea, 2008). Gudea also identified that teachers in online classrooms are responsible for framing the course, providing learning resources, and supporting student interactions.

The emergence of Multiliteracies through technologies necessarily requires people with proficient reading skills in order to cope with all information as well as new approach of teaching reading and Coaching is found beneficial for teaching reading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given, Vygotsky's attention to the "more knowledgeable other, the role of the instructor from this perspective also frames this study.

### **Attitudes Toward Reading**

Importantly, motivation clearly best support poor readers become proficient and students' attitudes toward reading positively enhance students' reading skills (Fox and Alexander, 2009 and Morgan and Fuchs, 2007). Hughes-Hassell and Lutz (2006) studies the habit and attitudes of middle school students toward reading and found that the reasons that most students read were for fun (57%), for getting attached to the characters (55%), and for relaxing (50%) respectively. Schatz and Krashen (2006) conducted a research study about students' attitudes toward reading in 1-6 grades and indicated that children's attitudes towards may decline children get older. The study of Ries, Eckert, McCoach, Jacobs, and Coyne, (2008) suggested that an enriched reading program that challenges and engages students may produce higher than a standard basal program. A majority of students preferred music and entertainment (63% & 53%). Moreover, teachers with higher efficacy made more positive predictions about students' academic, social success as well as attitudes (Banks, Dunston and Foley, 2013).

Development of the 21<sup>st</sup> century students was changed from "Knowledge" to "Skills" and also from teacher-centered to student-centered which the students learn through "Problem Based Learning" whereas teacher as a coach facilitating and supporting the students. The students are assigned to practice various skills such as searching evaluating and selecting appropriate information. In addition, they do real practice, creatively present, exchange knowledge and work with others, and construct their own knowledge. The students, therefore, need to have critical skills including building inspiration for the students

So that the students satisfy with learning which mostly are problem-learning (Problem-Based Learning: PBL) which is frameless and the students have intelligence freedom and the learning processes are considered more important than answers. Moreover, the evaluation of Coaching is to individually evaluate the students' progress not achievement because it is believed that the students have their own potential to develop themselves continuously. And also nowadays knowledge s massive and the teachers cannot teach them all.

### **Principles of Coaching**

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning mentioned three key principles of coaching as follows:

- Students are provided choices to learn according to their potential.
- Teachers and students spend more time to communicate and discuss what they want to learn appropriately.
- The focus of Coaching is bring knowledge in action

Additionally, Jim Knight (2011) added up other four crucial components of coaching which included equality, voice, reflection, and praxis. Coaching was also aimed to lead students to successful learning. Importantly, coaches should have experience and be expert in what they coach and be accepted from the learners. Coaches do need to have communicative skills, good manners, flexibility, wide vision, confidence, and reflective thinking. Killion (2009) indicated the roles of coaches were data coach, resource provider, mentor, instructional specialist, learning facilitator, catalyst for change, and learner.

### **PRIOR RESEARCH ON STUDENTS' READING DEVELOPMENT**

Kourea, Lyncartledge, and Mustri-Rao (2007) studied reading skills of Urban elementary students through Class Peer Tutoring and found that the students' reading achievement were significantly improved. All target students' reading fluency and comprehension scores on the standardized Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy

Skills (DIBELS) Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) passages were higher during intervention than at baseline as well as greater fluency shown on constructed paragraphs that included the tutoring sight words. Jewitt (2005) suggested that the literacy in the digital era of the 21st century is different than what was needed previously, therefore the school of literacy need to be expanded to respond to the changing context. Kolić-Vehovec (2014) examined developmental changes in metacognitive knowledge of reading strategies and attitudes toward reading during early adolescence. The results showed that girls demonstrated better metacognitive knowledge, as well as positive attitudes toward both recreational and academic reading when compared to boys. The findings indicated that gender had an effect on recreational reading attitudes. Morgan and Fuchs (2007) studied then' relationship between children's reading skills and motivation and concluded that both reading skill and motivation best help poor readers become proficient.

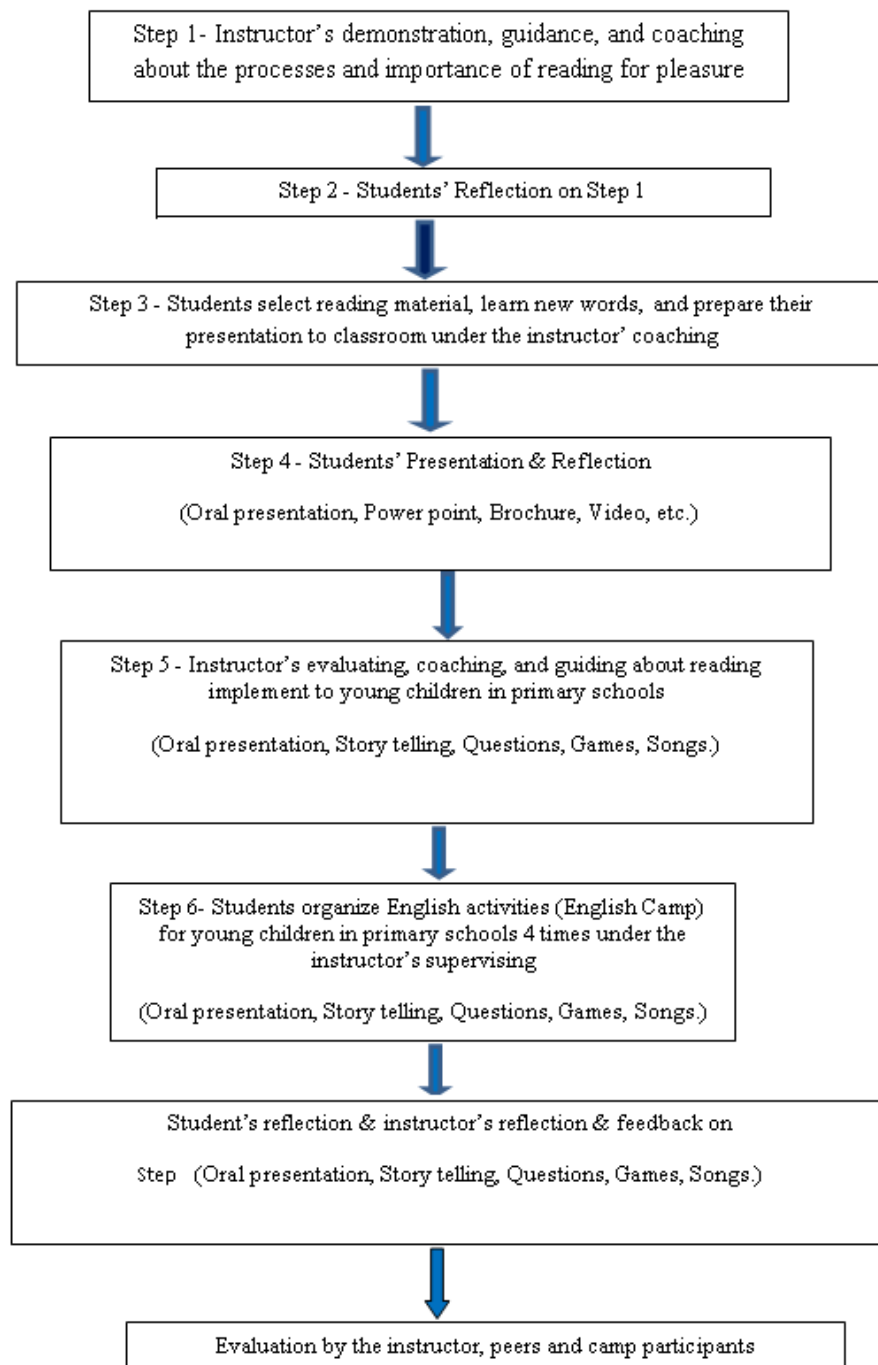
According to the research findings above and the changes of learning context, reading teachers need to apply effective teaching methodology to improve students' reading proficiency and attitude towards reading. Appropriate learning activities fit individual students and learning context effectively develop students' reading skills.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative research methodology using content analysis was used to analyze the data derived from multiple sources. Participants included ten 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of the TRU English International Program enrolled in the 15

week-course of Reading for Pleasure in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester in 2013 academic year. The instructor applied Coaching approach to coach the students to learn to read and make what they read productive.

Data were collected through the instructor, the students and the children participated in the English Camps. Examinations of course materials (course syllabus, records, responses to the interview), the instructor's observation and the students' performances and reflection, and review of student learning achievement were conducted. Finally, findings were double-checked by the researcher and reviewed by the inquiry participants (see Figure 1)



**Figure 1: Proseses of Developing Students' Reading Skills and Attitude Towrad Reading Using Coaching Approach**

The research instruments includes reading record forms, evaluation forms for students' presentation, evaluation forms for students' implement on English Camps for Young children, and guides for students' reflection. The data were therefore collected from reading record, evaluation forms for students' implement on English Camps, and Students' reflection.

## FINDINGS

The record of the students' Reading clearly showed all students were happy and actively working on their assignments. They were always well- prepared when working on their presentation and English camps. They met, planned and shared responsibilities. The students reflected that they were satisfied to be able to select Reading material they were interested. Their performances not only showed their English reading skills, but also creativity and working skills. The students' reading achievement and attitude towards reading are mostly greater than the beginning. To illustrate, 70 % of the students didn't like reading English before class, but 100 % of them positively change their attitude towards reading after class.

## DISCUSSIONS

According to the research results, effective instructional strategies strongly engaged students in self-learning. Since reading is the skills learners can learn by themselves, but be inspired by teachers, Coaching approach is an effective way to apply when teaching reading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where online texts are really massive and widely accessible. Using reading skills together with other working skills helps the students apply what they learn to real life serving their community. However, the research results may not completely reflect the picture of the students' reading ability because of the small number of the students participated in this study. In order to generalize the findings to larger populations, longitudinal research should be conducted in order to see a fuller picture of coaching approach in reading development. Future research studies should be conducted in larger areas involving participants from different subject areas.

## REFERENCES

1. Afflerbach, P, Cho, B, Kim, J, Crassas, Elliker, M, & Doyle, B. (2013). What Else Matters Besides Strategies and Skills? *Reading Teacher*, 66 (6), p440-448. DOI: 10.1002/TRTR.1146.
2. Alexander, P. A. (2012). Reading Into the Future: Competence for the 21st Century and the Disciplined Reading and Learning Research Laboratory, *Educational Psychologist*, 47(4), 259–280, 2012.
3. Baker. C. (2010). The impact of instructor immediacy and presence for online student affective learning, cognition, and motivation. *The Journal of Educator Online*, 7(1), 1-30. Retrieved from <http://www.thejeo.com/Archives/Volume7Number1/BakerPaper.pdf>
4. Banks, J, Dunston, Y. L, Foley, T. E. (2013).Teacher Efficacy as a Conduit for Enhancing Attitudes Toward Teaching Reading to African-American Students, *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15(1), 19–26.DOI: 10.1080/15210960.2013.754286
5. Brook, C, & Oliver, R. (2003). Online learning communities: Investigating a design
6. Conradi, k, Jang, b. g, Bryant, c, Craft, a, & McKenna, M. C. (2013). Measuring Adolescents' Attitudes Toward

- Reading, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(7) doi:10.1002/JAAL.183 © 2013 International Reading Association
7. Garrison, D. R. & Cleveland-Innes, M. (2005). Facilitating cognitive presence in online learning: Interaction is not enough. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 19(3), 133–148. Retrieved from <http://inquirygroup.edublogs.org/files/2007/10/cognitivepresence2005.pdf>
  8. Gudea, S. (2008). *Expectations and demands in online teaching: Practical experiences*. Hershey, New York: Information Science Publishing.
  9. Hoss, V, & Media, D. (2014). Importance of Reading Skills. Retrieved from <http://everydaylife.globalpost.com/importance-reading-skills-14778.html>
  10. Jewitt, C. (2005). Multimodality, ‘Reading’, and ‘Writing’ for the 21st Century, *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, 269(3) pp. 315/331
  11. Killion, J. (2009). Coaches Roles, Responsibilities, and Reach. In Jim Knight (Ed), *Coaching: Approaches & Perspectives*. p. 7-28. California: Corwin Press.
  12. Knight, J. (2011, October). What Good Coaches Do. *Educational Leadership*, 69(2), 18-22.
  13. Knight, J. (2009). *Instructional Coaching*. In Jim Knight (Ed), *Coaching: Approaches & Perspectives*. p. 29-55. California: Corwin Press.
  14. Kolić-Vehovec, S. (2014). Development of Metacognitive Knowledge of Reading Strategies and Attitudes Toward Reading in Early Adolescence: The Effect on Reading Comprehension), 1, 77-98 Kourea, K, Lyncartledge, G, & Musti-Rao. (2007). Improving the Reading Skills of Urban Elementary Students Through Total Class Peer Tutoring, *Remedial and Special Education*, 28(2), pp.95-107.
  15. Langer, J. A. (2006). Beating the odds: Teaching middle and high school students to read and write well. In R. B. Ruddell & N. J. Unrau (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (pp. 1040-1082). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
  16. Leu, D. J, Kinzer, C. K, Coiro, J. L, & Cammack, D. W. (2004). Toward a theory of new literacies emerging from the internet and other information and communication technologies. In R. B. Ruddell & N. J. Unrau (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (pp. 1570-1613). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
  17. Levy, R. (2009). Children’s perceptions of reading and the use of reading scheme texts, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(9) DOI: 10.1080/03057640903103769
  18. Limbrick, L, Wheldall, K, & Madelaine, A. (2012). Reading and Related Skills in the Early School Years: Are boys really more likely to struggle? *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 59(4), pp. 341–35.
  19. Masny, D, & Cole, D. R. (2009). Introduction to multiple literacies theory: A deleuzian perspective. In D. Masny and D.R. Cole (eds.), *Multiple literacies Theory: A deleuzian perspective* (pp.1-11). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

20. Mitchell, C, & Begeny, J. C. (2014). Improving Student Reading Through Parents' Implementation of a Structured Reading Program, *School Psychology Review*, 43(1), pp. 41-58
- Moan, P, & FUCHS, D. (2007). Exceptional Children Is There a Bidirectional Relationship Between Children's Reading Skills and Reading Motivation?, 73(2) pp. 165-183.
21. Reis, S. M, Eckert, R. D, Mccoach, D. B, Jacob, J. K. & Coyne, M. (2008).Using Enrichment Reading Practices to Increase Reading Fluency, Comprehension, and Attitudes. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 101(5)
22. Stacy, E. & Rice, M. (2002). Evaluating an online learning environment. *Australian Journal of Educational Technologies*, 18(3), 323-340.
23. Tobin, M, & Hill, E. W. (2012). The development of reading skills in young partially sighted readers, *British Journal of Special Education*.DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8578.2012.00540.x
24. Wilson, G, & Stacey, E. (2004). Online interaction impacts on learning; teaching the teachers to teach online. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 20(1), 33-48.